

From: Communications [<mailto:Communications@schools.nyc.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 3:06 PM

Subject: NYC DOE - PRESS RELEASE - ALL SCHOOLS AT JFK CAMPUS IN THE BRONX WILL REOPEN FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2015
N-12, 2015-16

ALL SCHOOLS AT JFK CAMPUS IN THE BRONX WILL REOPEN FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Damaged rooms have been sealed off and no instruction will be disrupted

Staff and students of all seven schools will return to JFK campus for September 9

NEW YORK – All seven schools at the John F. Kennedy Campus in the Bronx will reopen on the first day of school, Wednesday, September 9, with no disruption to instruction. The building, whose sixth floor was damaged in a gas explosion on August 20, is structurally sound and safe, and air quality tests have shown there is no possible danger for students, families, and school staff returning to the building.

Workers have been making all necessary repairs and have sealed off the damaged rooms with sheetrock walls and all classes and programs will be accommodated without any disruption to students' schedules. To make up for the loss of the damaged science labs, alternatives such as lab carts will be provided. There are functioning science labs in the building and students will have full use of all other facilities, including athletic fields. Air quality tests have been posted on the websites of each school. The DOE has been communicating updates to families.

School principals are scheduled to return to the building this week and continue preparing for the first day of school. Bids will go out for reconstruction work on the rooms that were damaged and repairs will begin later this year. Because all work will take place in sealed off rooms, no students will be affected. Workers from the DOE and the School Construction Authority have been working around the clock since the incident to repair damage, put up walls and above all else, to ensure the building is safe.

“We’ve had men and women working around the clock to repair the damage at the JFK Campus, and we are proud to announce the building will be ready to open its doors to all seven of its schools on opening day. We are immensely grateful to all the dedicated people who moved this work forward so thousands of students can begin their school year without disruption, and with the confidence in their school’s safety,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“I am appreciative to the hard workers from across our City agencies who have been working seven days a week to ensure students can return to their own schools with no disruption to their



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learning,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “This was a serious accident and it took a lot of hard work and dedication to get the building ready for school. Now we can all move forward and get back to the exciting work ahead: ensuring that our students can learn and achieve in the safest and most supportive environment possible.”

“The Department of Buildings has provided significant resources to this site since the explosion on August 20. We will continue to work with our fellow agencies to monitor this site,” said **Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler**. “The School Construction Authority has shown great leadership in repairing this prior to opening day.”

“Dozens of City agencies and partners have worked together around the clock since the August 20 gas explosion to address safety issues and begin restoring normalcy to the school and community,” said **OEM Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “NYC Emergency Management will continue to coordinate the interagency effort to repair and restore the JFK Campus in the Bronx.”

“The Health Department has reviewed the incident report, repair program, and environmental tests from the John F. Kennedy Campus in the Bronx, and these results demonstrate that the school's physical conditions and air quality are safe for children, faculty and staff,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “We applaud the Department of Education for taking such swift steps to have the building open and safe by the first day of school.”

“I commend the efforts of the Department of Education and other City agencies to quickly reopen and reconstruct the John F. Kennedy Campus,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. “Because of their hard work and dedication, 3,000 students and school staff will be able to begin the year at their home schools without disruption. While the clean-up continues, we also hope for a speedy recovery for the severely injured contractors involved in the explosion.”

“The dedicated professionals of the New York City Department of Education and the School Construction Authority under the intelligent, experienced leadership of Chancellor Carmen Fariña and SCA President Lorraine Grillo have come through for the children of the city of New York” said **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chair of the Assembly’s Education Committee**. “Our City is greater because of it. Congratulations to Mayor de Blasio on such a terrific team.”

“This is good news for JFK students. Everyone pulled together to get this done and I'm glad that the Manhattanites who attend JFK – including those who live in Marble Hill – will be able to start school on schedule,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer**.

“The Department of Education has assured us that the City’s Buildings Department and the FDNY have determined the JFK Campus is safe for students and staff to return to for the start of school next week. All agencies will monitor the reconstruction, and together will make sure returning students and staff are settled quickly, and made to feel comfortable, so they can focus on



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what's important – the start of their school year,” said **Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers.**

“CSA would like to commend Chancellor Carmen Fariña and the School Construction Authority for working in a timely manner to get this campus operational in time for the first day of school,” said **Ernest Logan, President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.**

“I am very happy that the students will be able to attend school as scheduled and that their education will not be complicated by this unfortunate event,” said **Assembly Member Guillermo Linares.**

“I am very pleased that all of the students at the Kennedy Campus will be able to attend school there starting September 9. I appreciate that the DOE and the Mayor made such great efforts to minimize the impact of this horrible incident on the students and I trust that they will work around the clock to repair the damage and restore all of the classrooms,” said **Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz.**

“I am happy to hear that the John F. Kennedy Campus will reopen on time for the 2015-2016 school year. The DOE has assured me that the air quality and structure of the building is secure for students to begin their studies on other floors. I am confident that the campus is safe and that students will not be at risk. I am thankful that the DOE, SCA, OEM and other agencies have taken swift action in this matter and have found a solution that did not force students to have to re-locate to other areas of City in order to begin the school year,” said **Council Member Andrew Cohen.**

There are approximately 3,000 students enrolled at the seven schools on the JFK Campus. Those schools are Marble Hill School for International Studies, Bronx Theatre High School, Bronx School of Law and Finance, English Language Learners and International Support Prep Academy, Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy, New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science, and New Visions Charter High School for Humanities. The two New Visions schools were temporarily relocated at In-Tech Academy and will be returning to JFK Campus.

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